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A defence of public
education.

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A

DEFENCE

OF

PUBLIC EDUCATION,

ADDRESSED TO

THE MOST REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF MEATH,

BY

WILLIAM VINCENT, D.D. (1739-1815)

In Anſwer to a Charge annexed to his Lordſhip's Diſcourſe preached at St. Paul's, on the Anniverſary Meeting of the Charity Children, and publiſhed by the Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge.

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LETTER

TO

THE MOST REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF MEATH.

MY LORD,

INDISCRIMINATE charges are as abundant in miſchief, as they are generally deficient in proof; and proof, in the buſineſs now to be diſcuſſed, your Lordſhip ſeems to have thought totally ſuperfluous: without any knowledge of your own, without enquiry or examination, you aſſume the teſtimony of Dr. Rennell as incontrovertible; not reflecting, that if his evidence cannot be ſubſtantiated, your own accuſation has nothing for its ſupport. What ground Dr. Rennell had to charge the Maſters of Public Schools with neglect of Chriſtian inſtruction, what right he had to aſſume the office of Cenſor, or how he brought himſelf to think, that he was more invulnerable than others of his profeſſion, I know not?

but, it is with regret, that I find his name introduced upon the preſent occaſion, becauſe I had entered into Articles of Peace with him two years ago, and had hoped that the ſubject in diſpute had been quieted once for all. At that time, upon the interference of ſome common friends, Dr. Rennell was pleaſed to make an exception in favour of me, and the ſchool under my ſuperintendance; and though a private acknowledgment was no ſatisfaction for a public accuſation, ſtill I was eaſily reconciled, and acquieſced, under the opinion of friends, who certainly wiſhed well to us both.

But if the teſtimony of Dr. Rennell is now to be revived, for the purpoſe of renewing the attack, it is not my intemperance, but the indiſcretion of his admirers, that brings the queſtion before the public in its preſent form. I hope I ſhall not tranſgreſs the bounds of moderation; but I have a right to be heard in my own defence, a double right on the repetition of the charge, without any new offence on my part; and if I felt this charge as an injury from an equal, I feel it as oppreſſion from a ſuperior.

Perhaps, it will be aſked, why I am ſo ready to ſtand forth before all other Conductors of Public Education? why my indignation is excited ſooner than that of others implicated in the ſame charge of delinquency? I hope, my Lord, to make it appear, that I am not more irritable, but more injured; becauſe my acquieſcence, in the firſt inſtance, has only expoſed me to a repetition of the affront. If

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any one pleads guilty, he may complain of want of generoſity in his accuſer, but he has no right to complain of his injuſtice. For my own part, I deny the fact; and many reaſons urge me to ſtand upon my defence, which may weigh little with others in the ſame predicament.

The firſt is, that, like Solon's, my time of life is my ſecurity. In the courſe of nature, the period of my public labours cannot be remote; and the remuneration of my ſervices, with which His Majeſty has been pleaſed to honour me, has made me independent, whenever my own comfort or convenience induce me to fix the moment of my retirement. My mind may ſuffer, indeed, from injurious and unmerited reproach; but the talents and ingenuity of Dr. Rennell, and the eloquence of your Lordſhip, will be exerted in vain to prejudice me in my circumſtances. You will both diſclaim the intention. I ſpeak not of your intention, but the fact; and the fact is, that if the world credits your aſſertions, in a very few years no man will be enabled to live by the emoluments of a Public School. It is in this point that I am ſuperior to the utmoſt efforts of my accuſers: and were I to retire to-morrow, I ſhould lay down my office with a conſcious ſatisfaction, in having cloſed the ſcene with a Defence of Public Education.

A ſecond inducement for undertaking this office, is, that the reproaches of Dr. Rennell ſtill remain unretracted and unexpiated: his private exception

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in my favour is of no value, if his public charge is ſtill to miſlead men of your Lordſhip's rank, conſequence, and diſcernment. It is now revived after two years given to ſooth it into oblivion, and may be repeated annually by every preacher called to the duty which your Lordſhip has performed; and if this charge ſhould now be left unanſwered, it may be deemed unanſwerable.

But the cauſe, above all others, which compels me to diſclaim all farther reſerve, is the extenſive circulation given to this reiterated attack, by means of the Society for promoting Chriſtian Knowledge. The ſanction of ſo venerable a body, added to the teſtimony of your Lordſhip and Dr. Rennell; the diſperſion of the Annual Sermon in the Metropolis, in every county of England and Wales, extended likewiſe into Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and the Eaſt-Indies, gives a celebrity and notoriety to this eſtimate of education in our great Schools, that all the abilities of Dr. Rennell, and all the addreſs of your Lordſhip, could not have effected. Dr. Rennell, my Lord, has publiſhed many Sermons, and I queſtion if his great name ever ſold an edition of five hundred copies; but the Society prints three thouſand; and, if we allow ten readers to a copy, here is an evil report propagated to thirty thouſand perſons, twice in the courſe of two years; which, if the event ſhould be proportionate to the means, would leave all the Public Schools in the kingdom without a ſcholar.

Surely

Surely this was not the intention of Dr. Rennell, of your Lordſhip, or the Society. No.—But you intended our reformation and amendment.—Alas! my Lord, I am too old for reformation:—if I have not already done my duty without this admonition, I cannot now change my method, my habits, or my opinions;—but if the admonition was not wanted, (as I ſhall prove in the following pages,) the miſchief is the ſame: but where am I to look for remedy or redreſs? The only hope of redreſs I had, was the interference of the Society. I applied for permiſſion to circulate with their annual packet, containing your Lordſhip's Diſcourſe, a Note, requeſting the members to ſuſpend their judgment on the point in queſtion, till I could be heard in my own defence; but the Board was ſo prepoſſeſſed either of my delinquency, or Dr. Rennell's veracity, that my application was utterly in vain. Nothing can diminiſh my eſteem and veneration for that excellent Society, which I have now attended for almoſt thirty years, with an affection that cannot be ſurpaſſed by the attachment of its beſt and warmeſt friends; but I feel ſomething like a departure from its uſual candour, in the preſent inſtance: for if a charge againſt any of its members is publiſhed under the ſanction of the Society, and that charge ſhould prove to be groundleſs, the injury is no longer that of the writer, but of the publiſher; and if an action for defamation would lie in this caſe, I imagine it muſt be brought, not

againſt

againſt Dr. Rennell, but againſt the Secretary of the Society. That I harbour no ſuch intention, your Lordſhip will readily believe; and the Secretary is ſo innocent of concerting any plan againſt me, or deſigning any evil by the publication, that he did not know the contents of the Diſcourſe, till the morning it was laid before the Board, and many copies were in the hands of the members preſent. No, my Lord, the Secretary, with all his deference to your Lordſhip's rank, his attachment to your perſon, and his reſpect for your talents and abilities, had never been induced, by curioſity or duty, to read one word of your Sermon. It paſſed from your Lordſhip's hands into the Secretary's, and from the Secretary to the Printer: it returned from the Printer by ſheets to your Lordſhip for correction; and when finiſhed, it was committed to the Binder, with whom it continued till it was laid unread upon the table. Now, my Lord, ſuppoſe the accuſation to be groundleſs; ſuppoſe the Sermon to have contained heterodoxy, or any thing worſe,—who was culpable?—not the Board,—for the Board never does ſee the Sermon;—not the Secretary, for he never looked at it;—not the Printer or Binder, for they will print or bind any thing that comes into their ſhop;—and yet, my Lord, with nobody reſponſible or accountable, this report of the Public Schools in England is to be propagated from the Liffey to the Ganges, as the opinion of the Society, adopted on the authority of Dr. Rennell and your Lordſhip.

Lordſhip. When I aſked for the inſertion of the Note for my own juſtification in the packet, I did not aſk for the opinion of the Board.—I was to defend myſelf; and till that defence could be prepared, I requeſted only not to be prejudged by the ſanction and publication of ſo venerable a body. Feſtus thought it unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and not withal to ſignify the crimes laid againſt him. I deſired only the converſe of this propoſition, that my crimes ſhould not be ſignified, without giving intimation at the ſame time that I was ready for my trial. I ſhould have obtained this requeſt from a Roman and a Gentile.

It is with infinite regret that I am compelled to allude to any tranſactions in a Society, which I reſpect above all others, for doing the moſt extenſive good with the leaſt poſſible parade; and I repeat, that it is with much concern I am compelled to recur to Dr. Rennell's Diſcourſe. But it is for your Lordſhip's information upon that point, that I muſt ſtate the following particulars. When ſome members of the Board interfered to effect a reconciliation between Dr. Rennell and myſelf, I no ſooner received his letter, with the exception in my favour, than I returned an anſwer by the ſame poſt, expreſſed in cordial terms, that I was contented to be ſilent. I was not a little ſurprized to find afterwards, that another letter was written by Dr. Rennell to the Board, much leſs favourable to me, and much more reſolute in cenſuring Public Schools and

Univerſities, than even his publication. I repented of my acquieſcence, but my word was paſſed, and I made no further complaint. Dr. Rennell will feel the value of this ſort of moderation, when I acquaint him that my Defence was ready for publication, and could have gone to the preſs the next morning. An Author who can ſtop at ſuch a point, can hardly be deemed irritable or implacable; but theſe facts it is now neceſſary to ſtate, becauſe your Lordſhip muſt have been unacquainted with them, or elſe you could not have grounded your own charge on the public teſtimony of Dr. Rennell, had you known his retractation in private. The expreſs words of your accuſation are theſe:

"I had propoſed to ſay a few words on the ſad "degeneracy of our Public Schools, in this moſt "important part of education, and their ſyſtema-"tic neglect of that religious inſtruction which in "the earlier parts of the Reformation, and even "to a much later date, was ſo carefully provided "for the higher and wealthier claſſes of the Britiſh "youth; but I found the ſubject anticipated by "Dr. Rennell, in his Sermon on this anniverſary, "and I could add nothing to what that zealous "and eloquent preacher had there urged, to call "the public attention to this portentous evil."—Note p. 39.

Surely, my Lord, "degeneracy," "ſyſtematic neglect of religious inſtruction," and "portentous evil," are terms harſh enough for the moſt zealous and

and eloquent preacher in Chriſtendom to adopt.—They could want no addition from your Lordſhip, if they are Dr. Rennell's language; and they cannot well be carried higher by any future eloquent preacher, if they are your Lordſhip's. You, my Lord, make no exception, becauſe you were unacquainted with Dr. Rennell's exception; and thus, all the conductors of public education are comprized in one general indiſcriminate charge, without a ſingle qualifying clauſe in favour of any one.

But groſs as this language is, there is nothing except the charge of ſyſtematic neglect of religious inſtruction, to prevent my arguing the queſtion with the moſt perfect compoſure: *that*, indeed, is a crime of ſuch a nature, that if it can be brought home and proved againſt me, or any maſter, no puniſhment can be too great. Neglect there is in all education, ariſing from the infirmity of human nature, and the tedium of treading the ſame dull round daily through a life of perpetual labour, confinement, and anxiety. Evils there are in all public education, produced by the habits and cuſtoms of the place, which can no more be eradicated out of ſchools than nations. Evils there are from the temper, habits, and manners of the times; and evils there are in the conſtitution and ſtatutes; for our anceſtors, though wiſe, were not perfect; and vice there is, wherever three hundred human beings are collected into a body. All this, therefore, I would have conceded; and on this, I imagine, your Lord-

ſhip's complaint is not founded. But the *ſyſtematic* neglect of religious inſtruction is a crime of the blackeſt dye: and I reſerve my obſervations on the indiſcretion and intemperance of my accuſers, till I have proved the imputation to be a falſehood.

Falſe I call it in direct terms; and calumnious I would have called it, but that to conſtitute calumny, I muſt prove that the intention of the accuſer was malicious, and that his malice was founded upon what he knew to be a falſehood himſelf. Of this I acquit both Dr. Rennell and your Lordſhip; but I believe that the zeal of Dr. Rennell made him conceive that this was a ſplendid topic for his eloquence, and that your Lordſhip miſtook rhetoric for argument, or aſſertion for truth; but in this inſtance, my Lord, you have gone a ſtep beyond the information of your brief. Dr. Rennell confined himſelf to the term "*many;*" but you comprehend all Public Schools in general, and condemn all in one ſweeping clauſe for degeneracy and ſyſtematic neglect.

But let us firſt ſettle the terms of the controverſy, and the extent of the charge. What does Dr. Rennell, or your Lordſhip, comprize under the expreſſion of Public Schools? Are we to underſtand only Wincheſter, Eton, and Weſtminſter? or, are we to extend our notion, as we ought to do, to the three other great ſchools in the Metropolis; to Harrow, Rugby, Mancheſter, Wakefield, and many more of equal magnitude in the North? If all theſe

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are to plead guilty to the charge, the rising generation is ripe for the machinations of a Voltaire, a Diderot, a d'Alembert, a Condorcet, or a Lepaux; and we may expect a revolution in Church and State, as soon as ever a prime agitator shall start up in this country to set the conspiracy in motion. I do not think, my Lord, that either you or Dr. Rennell carry your impeachment to this extent. If you do, I must maintain that your enquiries and your information will not bear you out in the event; for even in the three schools, which I suppose your accusations in reality to comprehend, your investigation is miserably deficient. Dr. Rennell was bred at Eton, and has lived at Winchester; but he knows no more of Westminster than Tom Paine does of the Bible. Just enough to misrepresent and condemn, but nothing to qualify him for a judge of what is excellent and good. But he does not include Westminster. No.—Not in his private judgment: but his Sermon is still sufficient to mislead your Lordship, and to influence the opinion of the public. If the attack is made in concert, it is overwhelming me with your united talents and abilities: if you have not consulted him, you have built upon a foundation which he has renounced.

What sense the Warden and Master of Winchester, or the Master of Eton, may have of this procedure, I know not; but they are men of abilities, and equal to their own defence. I have not communicated with them, because I had not the arro-

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gance to offer myſelf as a champion in the common cauſe; neither ought their intereſts, or eſtimation in the world, to be hazarded on my Defence, if it ſhould prove inadequate to its purpoſe. Wincheſter I know enough of, generally, to believe that the accuſation is groundleſs: and who is it that accuſes Eton? a man bred under the protection of the pious Founder, whoſe abilities have been nurtured and expanded under his roof,—thoſe abilities which are now employed to depreciate his eſtabliſhment. We have among us a piety and a gratitude to our nurſing mother; faults ſhe has, which we rather diſſemble than expoſe; and if one of her ſons had acted in a ſimilar manner, we ſhould have diſowned him as an alien. Dr. Rennell's character ſtands high in the world as a man of virtue, morality, and religion; thoſe of a ſimilar deſcription whom we have bred, are generally our firmeſt friends through life, and our ſyſtem is reprobated only by thoſe who never profited by their education.

Thus far I have proceeded on the general grounds of the accuſation. I ſhall now enter upon the ſpecific heads of the charge; for which, however unwillingly, I muſt of neceſſity recur to Dr. Rennell's diſcourſe, becauſe your Lordſhip has not deſcended to particulars. The ſpecific charges may be reduced to three heads.

I. That a preference is due to the religious education in Charity Schools, compared with the inſtruction in Public Seminaries.

II. That

II. That the Paganiſm taught in Public Schools, is noxious to the cauſe of Chriſtianity; and,

III. That Public Schools are guilty of a ſyſtematic neglect of all religious inſtruction.

1ſt. The firſt head of the charge is comprized in the following terms:

"Another circumſtance of the times, which "render the labours of the Society of peculiar exi-"gency, is the moſt lamentable and notorious defec-"tiveneſs of Chriſtian education in many of our "Public Schools, and other great Seminaries of "this nation." . . . . . "All who are acquainted "with the elementary ignorance of Chriſtianity, in "which young men are permitted to remain in the "greater part of our Public Inſtitutions, (and it is "impoſſible to be much converſant in them without "knowing this) will ſee how neceſſary the exertions "of this Society are, for preſerving the light of the "Goſpel among the lower ranks of men. . . . . "The charitable hand which ſupplies the deficiency "among the poor, is peculiarly grateful to God and "beneficial to mankind." See Dr. Rennell's Ser-mon, p. 7, before the Society, 1799.

This is the language of the Preacher; and in order to inform us, that *by the other great ſeminaries of the nation*, he deſignates the two Univerſities, he uſes in his note, A, the expreſſion of *young men in this ſituation*; a term excluſively appropriate to thoſe learned bodies.

Here then we are to learn, that the *defectiveneſs* of religious education in Public Schools, and the Univerſities, can only be counterbalanced by preſerving the light of the Goſpel among the lower ranks; and if the light of the Goſpel were extinguiſhed in the higher Seminaries, every miniſter of the Goſpel, who knows his duty, would unite with Dr. Rennell, in turning from the reprobate, and preaching to the poor, who would receive the glad tidings of pardon and redemption. But this is the fact to be proved, and Dr. Rennell has not proved it. When we look to the preſs of the two Univerſities for the laſt thirty years, we find greater treaſures of Theology iſſuing from that ſource, than in any period of equal length ſince the Reformation; and if it ſhall be ſaid, that there are a few learned in that ſcience ſtill remaining, but who pay little attention to the riſing generation,—where did thoſe that *are* learned acquire their knowledge? and what is the reaſon, that, previous to Dr. Rennell's animadverſion, and without waiting for his advice, lectures in Divinity were given in both thoſe Seminaries? lectures requiring ſo indiſpenſable an attendance, that no Biſhop will ordain a candidate without a certificate from the Profeſſor, that this duty has been fulfilled.

This is a ſubject foreign to my purpoſe: the Univerſities are not deficient in thoſe who are qualified to meet Dr. Rennell on any ground; and whenever his efforts

efforts ſhall be deemed noxious rather than intemperate, inſtead of one correſpondent he will have twenty.

But in Public Schools, wherein does this lamentable and notorious *defectiveneſs* conſiſt? and why is a preference given to the Teachers of Charity Schools rather than to the Inſtructors in a higher ſphere? Could not a popular audience be ſufficiently flattered without levelling all above them? Could not the educators of the loweſt be conſoled under their laborious duty, without detracting from thoſe whom the public voice, and the diſcernment of their nominators or electors had appointed to the management of the firſt Seminaries in the kingdom? Are not theſe men of the ſame profeſſion as their accuſer? And does Dr. Rennell deny faith and ability to every Churchman but himſelf?—No, not ability but will; *that* ſhall be anſwered in its place. But why are men bred to the inſtruction of youth by an apprenticeſhip, ſuppoſed more willing to execute their truſt than thoſe who have received the moſt liberal education known in Europe? This is no vain-glorious boaſt. Foreigners ſubſcribe to it; they allow the palm of general information to Engliſh travellers above all others. Where did they acquire it? In Engliſh Schools, in Engliſh Univerſities; and in nineteen inſtances out of twenty from the Engliſh Clergy. Why are theſe foundations to be decried? Why are theſe men to be degraded by a compariſon with thoſe who have never had ſimilar means of ac-

quiring knowledge, or equal advantages in life, manners, and education? But this is not ſufficient; the inferior is to be raiſed above the ſuperior; the children of the poor are to be told, that they have better inſtruction than thoſe above them; and the teachers of the poor are taught to believe, that their's is the pre-eminence; that they are to atone for the neglect, and compenſate for the deficiency of all that are engaged in the education of the higher orders. If the children who heard this diſcourſe underſtood it, I ſhould imagine, that their reſpect for the rank above them muſt be greatly diminiſhed, and their reſiſtance to ſubordination greatly increaſed; and if they were capable of drawing a concluſion, the natural conſequence ought to be, that, as they are wiſer and better than their ſuperiors, they ought to govern, and their ſuperiors obey.

As to the maſters who are to inſtruct the poor, a more uſeful order of men in their rank can hardly be ſuppoſed; and of the few known perſonally to me, I have had reaſon to judge well. The maſter who preſides in the ſchool with which Dr. Rennell and myſelf are connected, as Rectors of adjoining pariſhes, is a ſober, diſcreet, and laborious teacher; he officiates likewiſe as my pariſh clerk. If we ſuppoſe this good man to have liſtened with attention to Dr. Rennell's diſcourſe, what muſt be his opinion of his Rector? It could be no other than this—that he was maſter of a Public Seminary, indeed, but totally diſqualified either by want of will or ability, to

give

give the youth under his care the ſame religious inſtruction as the children of the poor received in the pariſh ſchool. But *was* this good man miſled by Dr. Rennell's information?—No. He would think himſelf as little qualified to inſtruct me in the art of teaching, as to correct, by an harangue from the deſk, the abominable doctrines which I was delivering in the pulpit.

The eloquence of Dr. Rennell on this ſubject, animated by his zeal, could not fail to impreſs the audience with an opinion, that he was a more ſtrenuous advocate for this ſyſtem of education, than all who had preceded, or ſhould follow him in the ſame office. But if this is the idea of his general patronage and protection, let us enquire how it ſtands in regard to its ſpecific application? For if there ſhould be two Rectors of contiguous pariſhes, connected with the ſame ſchool, and one of theſe Rectors ſhould, in the courſe of twenty years, have preached in favour of the inſtitution, almoſt annually, while the other had afforded his aſſiſtance only once. If one ſhould have taken a part in the management, while the other never attended a ſingle meeting;—if one ſhould have given his countenance to the maſter, encouraged him in his labours, and conſoled him under his difficulties, while the other hardly knew his name or his perſon;—if one ſhould have catechiſed the children, while the other never aſked them a queſtion;—if one ſhould have expounded the catechiſm, either privately or publicly,

almoſt every year, while the other never condeſcended to ſo humble an office—we will leave it to the judgment of the Public, which of the two was the greater advocate for the general ſyſtem? and which of the two was the more zealous ſupporter of the ſchool under their common protection?

It is not meant to detract from the ſervices of Dr. Rennell at St. Paul's: they were important and meritorious; but he ought not to arrogate all merit to himſelf: he ought not to aſſume a right of cenſuring every other ſpecies of education, but the one he was to recommend: he ought not to have flattered the poor at the expence of the rich: he ought not to have elated the poor above their condition, by enhancing the value of their acquirements, and depreciating thoſe of every other order in ſociety: he ought not to have told the inſtructors of theſe children, that they were more able, or at leaſt more willing, to do their duty than his brethren of the Clergy, who were engaged in the higher departments, and the more arduous office of educating the children of the wealthy and the noble. Our ſervice is ſufficiently painful in itſelf: why is our eſtimation to be leſſened in the eyes of the people, by the intemperance of a man who thinks he has no equal among his equals? If we do not fulfil our duty, we are amenable; but not before the tribunal of Dr. Rennell. He is not yet my Diocefan or my Principal, and I am thankful that he is neither.

II. The

II. The ſecond charge brought againſt Public Education, is this:

" There is ſcarcely an internal danger which we " fear, but what is to be aſcribed to a *Pagan* educa- " tion, under Chriſtian eſtabliſhments, in a Chriſ- " tian country." See Dr. Rennell's Sermon, note (*A*) p. 18.

To enforce this aſſertion, Dr. Rennell adduces the authority of Mr. Jones, in a publication called Conſiderations on the Religious Worſhip of the Heathen. Here, my Lord, I muſt ſpeak in very plain terms. I appeal to your candour, to your liberality as a man, and your charity as a Chriſtian, to judge definitively between Dr. Rennell and myſelf; whether the introduction of Mr. Jones's name on this occaſion, does or does not point the charge to me, excluſively of all the maſters of the Public Schools? Dr. Rennell has denied this, and does deny it in his letter to me. If I acquieſced in his denial; if I do not now charge him with an intention that ought never to be imputed to a man after his aſſertion to the contrary, I acquieſce in charity; but I leave the judgment to your Lordſhip.

There is a circumſtance which I conclude is totally unknown to your Lordſhip, and it is this: Mr. Jones's Tract, in queſtion, was addreſſed perſonally to me in the advertiſement, and in the title page. And if ſo, whom did Dr. Rennell addreſs when he charged Public Schools with the crime of

teaching

teaching PAGANISM *, rather than Chriſtianity? Speak candidly, my Lord. If you ſay I am not the perſon deſigned, I will ſubmit to your judgment. If you ſay I am, what muſt be your opinion of Dr. Rennell, the guide you have followed, the oracle you have believed? I abide by your deciſion, without any appeal to the opinion of the public; for I will argue the queſtion as if I admitted Dr. Rennell's aſſertion, that I am not the perſon charged with the offence.

The firſt point I have to complain of, is, that the reading of Pagan Authors is converted into a Pagan Education; a perverſion of terms that conceals a fallacy under a moſt invidious aſſumption. For who is a diſciple of Fo, becauſe he learns Chineſe? or a Bhuddiſt, becauſe he reads Sanſkreet? If the wild mythology of Hindoſtan is thought an object worthy the labours of a Sir W. Jones, a Wilkins, or a Maurice, to explore; if ſome men of the moſt conſummate learning have dedicated their lives to inveſtigate the extravagancies of the Egyptian, Perſian, Peruvian, or Druidical ſyſtem; does it follow that they are tainted with the reſpective ſuperſtitions?—but it will be ſaid theſe are men, and we teach children; be it ſo. Yet I aſſert, that I never yet found a child of ten years old, who believed in the transformation of Jupiter into a bull,

* The word is in capitals, in Dr. Rennell's Note, A.

or

or a ſwan, or a ſhower of gold; nor a child, in the nurſery, convinced that crows ſung, or trees talked, or aſſes played on the fiddle. The ſcruples of Dr. Rennell, after baniſhing the abominable heathen Poets out of our ſchools, may wiſh to diſcard Æſop and Pilpay from our families. He has read Rouſſeau,—Rouſſeau complains, that in La Fontaine, foxes lie; and his *cléve* muſt not ſuſpect that there is ſuch a thing as a lie in the world. Sweet innocence! he will find plenty of lies, and falſehood, and deception too, when he ſhall enter upon the ſcene of life; and perhaps it were better that he ſhould learn the diſtinction in theory, before he ſuffers from them by experience. But children of five years old are not deceived by fables, more than by the parables in ſcripture. If Jotham makes a bramble talk, why may not Æſop? And children of ten, are no more miſled by the Gods of Ovid, than men are by the miracles of Apollonius or Creeſhna.

I ſtated theſe ſentiments in a letter to Mr. Jones, upon the publication of his Tract; and I explained to him the courſe of our religious inſtruction at Weſtminſter. His anſwer I have in my poſſeſſion, dictated by himſelf, but written by a friend. For, alas! his hand was no longer able to wield that pen, which he had employed ſo often, and ſo ably in the cauſe of Religion. He admits my exculpation; he approves of the propriety and conſiſtency of our plan; he exhorts me to purſue it: and I reflect

with

with pleaſure that he cheered my labours with his bleſſing, not many days before he was himſelf to be received into the habitation of the bleſſed.

The plan, my Lord, of our human, moral, and religious inſtruction, is not mine; it is in our ſtatutes. I am accountable for nothing but the execution of it. I am not authoriſed, if I were willing, to ſubſtitute Prudentius for Virgil, or Gregory Nazianzen for Homer:—but I have not the will more than the power; for our authors are not intended to teach Paganiſm, but to ſet before our youth the beſt models of writing that the world affords. Whither ſhall we go for theſe, but to the Romans, or to the Greeks, who were *their* maſters, as well as ours? and, Pagans as they were, theſe maſters were not ignorant of the moral duties contained in the ſecond table of the Decalogue: for we learn from Sophocles, that they acknowledged the

——ἄγραπτα, κρ'σφαλῆ θεῶν
Νόμιμα . . . . . .
Οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθὲς, ἀλλ' ἀεί ποτε
Ζῇ ταῦτα, κουδεὶς οἶδεν, ἐξ ὅτα 'φάνη.

Antigone, l. 455.

And we are taught by the Hymn of Cleanthes, that in regard to the contents of the firſt table, they were not utterly in the dark.

The uſe that has been made of that extraordinary compoſition on the Continent, is no reaſon for excluding it from a Chriſtian Seminary: it is the application

plication of it, by the teacher, that may pervert it to a bad end; but there is no danger in ſhewing, that the Heathens in the midſt of darkneſs retained ſome knowledge of the origin of evil; that ſome among them rejected the Epicurean doctrine of fate and chance; or that others did not place the firſt happineſs of life in pleaſure *. When we have ſuch authors as theſe in our hands, if a maſter does not explain the ſentiment of Sophocles by the text of St. Paul, and contraſt the eternal unwritten law of the Gentiles, with *the law engraven on the heart;* if he does not compare the language of Cleanthes, Plato, Socrates and the Stoic ſchool, with the doctrines of Revelation; if he does not point out how far thoſe doctrines approach the truth, and how infinitely they fall ſhort of the Word of God, that maſter is not of our ſtock, nor worthy of the place he holds. Upon ſuch opportunities as authors or ſentiments like theſe afford, I remember to this hour, the tone, the manner, the elevated warmth of my own preceptor, the venerable Metropolitan of York; and I feel at this moment, that I owe the firmeſt principles of my mind, and my firſt reverence of the Scriptures, to his inſtruction.

* Young men place their happineſs in pleaſure, and are ſoon compelled to own that all is vanity and vexation of ſpirit; thoſe of riper years are taught that the firſt happineſs of life is in their knowledge of God and of his agency. The ſecond is, where Ariſtotle has placed the firſt, in the contemplation of the mind itſelf, in the acquirements it has made, and the information it poſſeſſes.

You will think, my Lord, perhaps, that I catch at a ſplendid example of good, to hide the deformities of the bad; that I ſuppreſs the ignorance of Pagan Poets and Hiſtorians, to take refuge under the more enlightened diſcoveries of Philoſophers; but I do aver once more, that I never found a child in the lower forms ideot enough to want guarding againſt the ſeduction of his mind by the Gods or Metamorphoſes of Ovid; or one advanced into the higher claſſes, who could not reliſh the ſarcaſm of Elijah, when applied to the Gods of Homer. "Cry "aloud; for he is a God! either he is talking, or "he is purſuing, or he is on a journey: or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awaked." Theſe are the admonitions which our daily duty affords us opportunity to enforce; and the bitterneſs of an adverſary dare not aſſert, that when we have Homer in our hands, our reverence for the Poet makes us forget our religious obligations.

Mr. Jones, with as ſincere a faith as ever adorned a Chriſtian, undoubtedly had prepoſſeſſions of this ſort. The circumſtances of the times operated more powerfully on his mind, than on others who were poſſeſſed of leſs fervency and zeal. He had lived to ſee the Chriſtian religion overwhelmed in France, and altars erected to Liberty, and Reaſon, and Nature, and Nonſenſe. He ſaw the groſſneſs of Heatheniſm, as he thought, reviving in the caprice of imagination, and he wiſhed to warn his own countrymen againſt a ſimilar cataſtrophe. Had he lived to the preſent

moment

moment his apprehenſions might have been diminiſhed; he might have been convinced that no ſuch evil would have ariſen here from a claſſical education; and that it did not ſpring in France from any ſuch ſource, but from a philoſophy that deteſted ſolid inſtruction next to the religion of the Goſpel;—from a faction, that by a civic education meant ignorance and barbariſm;—from a fanatic groupe of the illuminated, who replaced the profeſſors diſcarded from the college of Louis le Grand by a corporal of the guards.

But if Mr. Jones was miſled by his apprehenſions, his language was calm, temperate, and friendly; he neither overcharged the colouring, nor perverted the terms. Dr. Rennell has done both. By ſubſtituting *Pagan* for *Claſſical* education, he cajoled all thoſe who were ignorant enough not to know the diſtinction between reading Pagan authors, and teaching the Pagan religion; and thus he made a ſecond appeal from the learned to the ignorant: to the ignorant, I ſay, becauſe there is not an individual in the nation, of a rank to have partaken of a claſſical education, who could have been deceived by the fallacy for a moment. The luminaries of the Church in all ages, from Bede to Roger Bacon, from Bacon to the Reformation, and from the Reformation to the preſent hour, were all formed upon claſſical inſtruction. And if the writings of our Engliſh Divines ſtood higher than all others in the eſtimation of Europe, for ſolidity of reaſoning, and ſuperiority of compoſition,

what other cauſe can be aſſigned for it, but the excellence of the models by which their ſtyle was formed, and their judgment corrected? And if we are now forbidden to have recourſe to the ſame means of information, it is one ſtep towards the re-eſtabliſhment of the *imprimatur* of our own country, or the *index expurgatorius* of the Inquiſition. We know that Chryſoſtom, Gregory Nazianzen, and Jerom were as well verſed in the elegancies of claſſical literature, as in the ſublime language and important truths of the Scripture. And we know that Tillotſon, Pearſon, Butler, and Sherlock, were all trained under this execrable Pagan inſtitution, which is continued in our ſchools, both public and private, to the preſent hour. Are all who read the Koran diſpoſed to become Mahometans? All who read Iamblichus, Myſticks? or all who read Manetho, Aſtrologers? Theſe, indeed, are depths of corruption which we do not fathom; but we aſſert, that our pupils are no more liable to deluſion from the miracles of Livy, or the oracles of Herodotus, than men are from theſe ſeductions of deeper reſearch. In Hiſtory and Oratory, the Gods are not *always* preſented to our contemplation; in Poetry, the fineſt paſſages are not dependent on mythology; but it is the compoſition itſelf, the ſtyle, the diction, the manner, the ſublimity, the perfection of the model that is ever before our eyes, ever preſent to our mind, ever inſtructing and forming our underſtanding, and ever ſtimulating us to a deſire of equal excellence or competition.

Whenever thoſe who decry claſſical inſtruction ſhall produce us works more worthy of imitation than thoſe of the ancients, we will leave the inferior models for the better; but if ever the human intellect was cultivated to the extent of its powers, if ever the arts were carried to the ſummit of perfection, if ever generous competition effected more than the thirſt of gain, it was in Greece; and if the treaſures of Greece, becauſe they are Pagan, are now to be hidden from the Britiſh youth, they will be replaced, not by a religious, but by a civic education, and barbariſm in its rudeſt form. All knowledge, all letters, arts and ſciences may be miſemployed; but it is notorious falſe reaſoning to argue from the abuſe of any good againſt its uſe; and all the eloquence of Dr. Rennell will never prove, that more evil is derived from Greek literature than good. *Whence* was the eloquence he employs to decry theſe wicked Pagans derived, but from a Pagan ſource? From his knowledge of the Ancients, from his contemplation of Demoſthenes or Cicero? Perhaps he has been miſled by the *divine* Philippic of the Roman, and miſtaken Obloquy for Rhetoric; perhaps it was congenial to his talents to copy rather the railing accuſation of the Orator againſt Antony, than his eulogy of Ceſar.

But *where* did Dr. Rennell acquire that knowledge, which, in your Lordſhip's opinion, conſtitutes him the moſt eloquent preacher of the age?—At Eton. *Where* is Dr. Rennell's ſon training up to the

the ſame degree of eminence?—At Eton. And why is the family of the Rennells alone to eſcape the contagion of theſe Pagan principles, while thouſands bred in the ſame celebrated Seminary are all tainted with the infection?

But I have done with this article of the impeachment. I had intended to cloſe it with an anſwer to ſome of the more general reflections on Public Education, by Milton, Cowley, and Addiſon: but a few words muſt ſuffice.

Milton complained of the years that were waſted in teaching the dead languages, and propoſed a more compendious method of his own; but Johnſon, who had taught theſe languages himſelf, obſerves, that no man can teach faſter than a boy can learn. We know nothing of Milton's ſucceſs: for not a name of all his pupils is upon record: but we know that the brighteſt luminaries of the age iſſued from the ſchool of Buſby; and we know that to form the habits of literature, time is required as well as teaching.

Cowley complained that claſſical education taught *words* only, and not *things*; but it ought to be conſidered, that all the inſtruction of childhood depends more on memory than intellect. When the age of comprehenſion comes, from twelve or fourteen to ſixteen or eighteen, if the maſter teaches only words, he is a blockhead. It is the compoſition of the Poet he is to notice, and not the rendering a word of the original by its correſpondent term in Engliſh; the

order,

order, connexion, and relation of part to part, the alluſions to Hiſtory, Mythology, and Geography; and if theſe are not things rather than words, where are we to ſearch for them?

Addiſon deemed it an inexpiable error, that boys with genius or without, were all to be bred Poets indiſcriminately; and if this were our object in teaching proſody, his reproof would be juſt; but no ear can be formed to harmony, no Poet can be read with pleaſure, no intimate acquaintance with any dead language can be obtained, without a knowledge of proſody. Greek is leſs underſtood than Latin, becauſe the compoſitions in that language are leſs frequent; and Hebrew is leſs underſtood than either, becauſe no one compoſes in it at all. But will not proſe compoſition anſwer the purpoſe as well as verſe?—No teacher will think ſo who has tried the experiment; and the practice of all ſchools proves, that proſody is never neglected, unleſs where the maſter is ignorant of it himſelf.

I have much more to ſay in anſwer to theſe ſeveral objections, but they are foreign to the immediate purpoſe of my Defence; and I ſhall proceed immediately to the conſideration of the laſt article exhibited againſt Public Education, by your Lordſhip and Dr. Rennell. The recital muſt be dull, but it ſhall be true.

III. In the Note to Dr. Rennell's Sermon, the charge ſtands thus:

"We

" We cannot but lament that in *very few* of our " beſt endowed Seminaries, the ſtudy of Chriſtianity " has that portion of time and regard allotted to " it, which the welfare of ſociety, the progreſs of " deluſive and ruinous errors, and the true intereſt " of ſound learning itſelf, ſeems at the preſent time " *peculiarly* to call for. In *ſome* of them, and thoſe " not of *ſmall* celebrity or importance, *all* conſide- " ration of the revealed will of God is paſſed over " with a reſolute, ſyſtematic, and contemptuous " neglect, which is not exceeded in that which " the French call their *National Inſtitute*." See Dr. Rennell's Sermon, note (A) p. 18.

Dr. Rennell, by the terms " ſome," and " very " few," leaves an opening for exception, as has been already acknowledged; but when you, my Lord, adopt his expreſſion of ſyſtematic neglect, and apply it to Public Schools in general, without diſcrimination or qualification, Dr. Rennell is ſtill accountable for the error into which he has led your Lordſhip; and your Lordſhip accountable for the evil report which you have publiſhed to the world, without ſufficient authority or examination. The ſame outcry, my Lord, is to be found in ſeveral of our religious and moral writers of the preſent day, —in Cowper, in Dr. Randolph of Bath, in Mr. Giſborne, and Mrs. Trimmer: and the Secretary of the Society informs me very coldly, that he is little acquainted with Public Schools, but he has heard ſimilar reports. This from a friend, my Lord, was

was a reproach more ſevere than from an adverſary; a friend, my Lord, who had written the letter dictated by Mr. Jones; who had read the exculpation which I ſent to that excellent divine; and who, by his preſent anſwer to my application, gives me reaſon to think, that he either did not remember my Defence, or did not believe one word of it. I felt this as the reproof of a friend, and I am ſtill in friendſhip with him; for he is a good man, and an admirable ſecretary; but if his opinion, or influence, have at all contributed to promote the rejection of my requeſt, by the Board, I ſhall feel that our excellent Society, like many others, is rather too much under the direction of its officers.

Theſe, however, are incidental circumſtances; and I now proceed to my Defence.

It would appear, from the imputations of your Lordſhip and Dr. Rennell, as if you were both ignorant, that every Collegiate foundation has a book of ſtatutes, and that the ſtatutes of all theſe foundations are very full and expreſs on the enforcing of religious duties, and attendances on the office of worſhip. What the ordinances in other inſtances may be, I know not; but the religious offices at Weſtminſter, preſcribed by our ſtatutes, amount to prayers (including the graces) ten times a day: of theſe none are actually omitted *, except the prayers at

* The omiſſion of early prayers in this, and other foundations has ariſen from the manners of the age; thoſe who are not in

at ſix o'clock in the morning; the majority of the others is performed regularly from five to nine times every day, when we attend ſchool twice, with a remiſſion on one day only in the week; for this neglect, which is confeſſed, I muſt expect your Lordſhip's reprehenſion; but the world, in general, will perhaps think that the office is ſtill too frequent. The performance of this ſervice is generally enforced with as much external decency as can be enacted, allowing for the natural impatience of boys under reſtraint, and the levity of youth. The Latin prayers at ſix in the morning, and eight in the evening; with the Engliſh at twelve and five, comprehend nearly the whole ſervice of the Church. Theſe, ſo far as they are performed, are performed with all the propriety which the preſence and authority of the maſter can effect; the others are brief and momentary; but in the execution of this duty, the ſecond maſter, on three days in a week, at leaſt, is often nine times perſonally preſent.

If it ſhall be aſked, what effect this ſervice has upon the morals of our youth? for the preſent I ſhall anſwer, that the habit of prayer is a good habit. I am now only contending againſt the re-

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bed early, cannot riſe early. Our anceſtors retired with the curfew; and yet Matthew Paris complains, that, in performing the *Ante-lucan* ſervice, the Monks of his Abbey (St. Alban's) were aſleep, and the reader was unintelligible from diſpatch.

ſolute

ſolute and contemptuous neglect of our duty with which we are charged; and I maintain, that whatever the effect may be, here is a *reſolute* and *perſevering* attendance on the offices preſcribed.

The next object of our ſtatutes is to put the Scriptures into the hands of our ſcholars, from the day on which they enter the School, to the day they leave it: they commence with tranſlating the Pſalms almoſt daily; they proceed to the Goſpels; then to a collection of Sacred Exerciſes, appropriate to the School; and finally, to produce a compoſition in verſe, from the Pſalms, every Monday. This is the buſineſs of the lower School. In the higher claſſes, the Sacred Exerciſe is ſtill uſed for compoſitions in verſe, the Greek Teſtament, Grotius, and the Hebrew Pſalms; and throughout the year, on Saturday, a Hiſtory, or other portion out of the Scriptures, is appointed for a Bible exerciſe in verſe: added to this, the Catechiſm, or Biſhop Williams's expoſition, is as regularly repeated on Monday morning, in the lower forms, as in a Pariſh School; attended with ſuch an oral explanation as might inſtruct the Pariſh Teacher, as well as thoſe he teaches. In the higher claſſes, there is another ſort of Religious Inſtruction, which ſhall be noticed in its proper place.

Such, my Lord, is the Inſtitution that Dr. Rennell calls a Pagan ſyſtem; and ſuch are the labours of men, that he accuſes of reſolute, contemptuous,

and ſyſtematic neglect of Chriſtian Inſtruction. But in all this, my Lord, we claim no merit; it is the routine of buſineſs, the preſcription of our ſtatutes: whether any effect follows from it or not, we have performed a duty, we have fulfilled our covenant, and we are no farther accountable to man. If we have any merit, it is in the execution of voluntary and higher offices; but theſe, your Lordſhip and Dr. Rennell have no right to exact, nor the World, nor the Parents of the children entruſted to our care; we contracted only for this, and this we have preformed. I have performed it for forty years; from the day I ſat as Uſher at the firſt form, to the preſent moment in which I am writing. I acknowledge no delinquency or neglect; and if any can be proved againſt me, I aſk for no favour, but let judgment be paſſed.

So much for the reſolute and contemptuous, but I come now to the ſyſtematic neglect; an imputation of your Lordſhip's, in common with Dr. Rennell. Now, this charge will fall to the ground of itſelf, if it can be proved, that, in any one inſtance, we do more than what the letter of our ſtatutes enjoins. The inſtances I produce are theſe: Firſt, The expoſition of the Catechiſm; and, Secondly, The application of every paſſage in Scripture to inſtruction, as ſoon as our Pupils are of an age to comprehend. If there is a ſingle leſſon of the Greek Teſtament, where the opportunity for this is not embraced; if

there

there is a ſingle exerciſe out of the Bible, propoſed or explained to the Claſſes, without this object in view; without conſidering the moral and religious tendency of the ſubject, as well as its arrangement for poetical compoſition, among us, the teacher would be deemed inexcuſable. This opportunity occurs weekly; and, in the courſe of paſſing through the upper claſſes, the whole Hiſtory, and moſt of the prophetical Writings come at leaſt once in review, and become objects of the labour, meditation, and reflection of every individual. But if this is thought a matter of courſe, what ſhall be ſaid of our leſſon in the higheſt claſs, where Grotius preſents us with almoſt all the arguments that have been advanced in defence of our holy religion? I aver, that it is now, and always was, the moſt laboured leſſon of the week. If a boy were ſuffered, in this inſtance, to render the *words* only, then might we be ſaid to neglect the *things* which belong unto Salvation: but it employs more time, and is enforced with more earneſtneſs than any leſſon in the week. The whole is read in the courſe of two years; and no individual, who completes his education, is ſent into the world without having all the evidences of the Chriſtian Religion ſet before him. This, my Lord, an indifferent perſon would call elementary inſtruction, at leaſt; but Dr. Rennell, by an uniformity of perverſion, tranſmutes it into elementary ignorance. I cannot ſufficiently expreſs my contempt of the inſinuation.

In

In Paſſion Week, it is the cuſtom of the School to take our leſſon, for the higheſt claſs, from ſome peculiar ſubject of the New Teſtament: ſometimes, it is the Hiſtory of Paul, from the Acts; ſometimes, the Abrogation of the Ceremonial Law, from the Epiſtle to the Galatians; at other times, the Sacrifice and Atonement, with the doctrine of Faith and Works, from the Epiſtle to the Romans; and our laſt ſubject was, the Sermon on the Mount. Whether the lectures upon theſe occaſions are good or bad, ſufficient or inſufficient, muſt depend upon the ability of the inſtructor; but they are delivered with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his ſoul, with all the powers that he poſſeſſes, with all the knowledge that he has acquired.

I ſhall not dwell upon the preparation of our boys for confirmation; it occurs but once in two years, and it may be conſidered as a duty in courſe, rather than proceeding from the voluntary inclination of the maſter; but it conſiſts, my Lord, of a catechetical lecture, continued for four, five, or ſix days; it is executed with fidelity, and, I believe, with good effect. I have never ſeen an inſtance of that irreverent and tumultuous behaviour which occurs too frequently in the numerous aſſemblage from contiguous diſtricts, but a ſedate, temperate, and orderly attendance.

The laſt inſtance I ſhall produce, is a concern of ſuch high importance, that I wiſh to ſpeak of it with

every

every caution that diffidence can ſuggeſt: It is the celebration of the Supper of the Lord; a momentous duty, when propoſed to youth; and thought, by ſome, to be of too ſerious a nature to be undertaken by any of their early age, levity, and inexperience. But the opinion of the primitive Church was in favour of early communion; our own office of confirmation, ſuppoſes all that have been confirmed to be ripe for this duty; and the ſtatutes of the Univerſities and collegiate Schools, which enjoin the participation of this bond of fellowſhip four times in every year, are in correſpondence with the canons which bind the whole body of the Laity under the ſame obligation. The Laity have freed themſelves from this injunction; the laws of toleration, and the manners of the times have taken all power out of the hands which ought to have enforced it, and religion is prejudiced by the change; but, as Miniſters of the Goſpel, it may be preſumed, that we have no inclination to relax; and, if we had the will, we have not the power to abrogate our ſtatutes, or relieve thoſe from the obligation whoſe attendance it is our duty to enforce.

What remains then, but to execute the truſt repoſed in us, to the advantage of thoſe committed to our care; to inſtruct and inform them in regard to the nature of the inſtitution, to prepare them to the utmoſt of our power. This is a duty, my Lord, moſt painfully and energetically performed; prayers

are

are ſelected for the purpoſe; and, in addition to the other offices of the day, performed, during the whole week previous, in the maſter's houſe; and upon one day in that week, a lecture, or rather affectionate addreſs, is delivered to them, in a manner which I wiſh your Lordſhip or Dr. Rennell could atteſt. I have, with very little exception, perſonally, for thirty years, executed this office, four times in every year; and I have every reaſon to believe, that it is acceptable, ſalutary, and efficacious. I have received the thanks of ſeveral, after they have been many years removed from my tuition; and, I perſuade myſelf, that I have laid in many, a foundation of virtue and religion, which will be built upon by thoſe who have received the inſtruction, and be acknowledged by every one but my accuſers. The firſt part of Chriſtian education is to make young people acquainted with the Scriptures: the ſecond is, to explain the doctrines, and apply the precepts; both, ſo far as I am a judge, are provided for in the courſe of inſtruction, which I have now detailed: the former part by our ſtatutes, the latter by the practice and attention of the inſtructors.

But here, my Lord, I expect to be told that all this may be done without effect; that the mere performance of this taſk is nothing, without the will, the mind, the example, the fervency, the zeal of the inſtructor. On this head I have nothing to offer for myſelf; but on this head I muſt obſerve, that

neither Dr. Rennell or your Lordſhip are authoriſed to be my judges. To my own maſter I am to ſtand or fall, and whether my foundation is gold, wood, or ſtubble, muſt be determined before that tribunal, where I muſt plead no merit of my own, but appear with conſcious trembling, for my imperfections, negligences, and omiſſions, and feel that there is but one hope of pardon for me and for you.

Or it will be ſaid, that all this is without effect, becauſe vice ſtill exiſts. Doubtleſs it does, in ſchools as well as nations. Education can no more extinguiſh vice than law; but every good government, and every good inſtitution of learning aim at the correction of the governed. And if you aſk whether we perceive the immediate effect of our endeavours, I muſt anſwer with heſitation. For we caſt our bread upon the waters, but we do not expect to find it till after many days. We experience no inſtantaneous conviction or converſion, nor do we hope it; and if we aſſerted it, it might be juſtly replied, that it is eaſy to make boys as well as men hyprocrites, but very difficult to make them religious. As far as my own obſervation ſerves, it is the ſeed ſown which is to ripen for the harveſt, when the age of reflection ſhall arrive. Men, even young men, feel the want and conſolation of religion; and it is when thoſe thoughts preſent themſelves, that memory will ſuggeſt the precepts and principles propoſed to them in their youth. It

is to that period we look forward for ſucceſs; for though the majority among us is always on the ſide of virtue, I dare not ſay that the principles of religion are as evident now as we hope them to be hereafter.

If Public Education were a ſyſtem of corruption, in the ſecond generation the ſtain of vice muſt be indelible; but ſome of the beſt families in the kingdom have been bred among us for ſix or ſeven generations, and they continue the ornament of our ſchool to the preſent hour. I ſee the lateſt objects of my care promiſing to anſwer all the expectations of their friends, and of their country. The companions of my life are thoſe who have been bred under my tuition, and better friends or better men I know not where to find; and whatever imputations I experience from the world, or thoſe who know me not, my reward on this ſide Heaven I leave to their gratitude and remembrance. Of myſelf I am aſhamed to ſpeak; I know it is fooliſhneſs of boaſting: but if I have offended in this point beyond the ſtricteſt line of ſelf-defence, I intreat the indulgence of all that ſhall favour theſe ſheets with a peruſal. The charge againſt me was indiſcriminate—it could only be repelled by a ſtatement of particulars. I have now ſtated them, and I abide by the judgment of the Public.

But I cannot lay down my pen without calling upon your Lordſhip for a public revocation of your charge,

charge, ſo far as you impute ſyſtematic neglect to the conductors of Public Education; and if, with ſuch revocation, you ſhall chooſe to inſiſt upon the other articles of impeachment, I requeſt your Lordſhip to make inquiry into the facts before you aggravate the injury. Thoſe who have been bred at Weſtminſter are to be met with in every circle; interrogate them on the ſubject—not generally, whether they have had a religious education, but particularly, whether the various duties here ſpecified have been performed. Thoſe only can ſatisfy your inquiries who have completed their education among us, and have enjoyed the benefit of the foundation. the information of others will be imperfect, extending only as far as their progreſs and ſituation in the ſchool enabled them to ſee and judge. If, after ſuch inveſtigation, your Lordſhip ſhall find that you have injured a man who never gave you cauſe of offence, I think you will be ſorry for having repoſed implicit confidence in Dr. Rennell; and it will be no pleaſing ſenſation to reflect, that you have prejudiced the intereſts and eſtimation of a body of men whoſe life has been devoted to the ſervice of their country. Our life is not an unhappy one: the attachment of the good, and their ſucceſs in life compenſates for the failure of thoſe who have profited leſs by our endeavours; and if the performance of a laborious duty does not render it unhappy, why is it to be made ſo by unprovoked inſult or unauthoriſed animadverſion? Forty years labour, and fifty years experience, entitle

me to a retirement of quiet and independence. But if my retirement is to be embittered with the reproach of having done no good, of ſyſtematic neglect, of reſolute and contemptuous inattention to my duty —I anſwer, once for all, that "contemptuous neglect," is a term paſt comprehenſion; contempt of a duty towards God is not wickedneſs, but inſanity. And "reſolute or ſyſtematic neglect," I diſclaim, as a charge utterly falſe and groundleſs; a falſehood I have proved it, if my teſtimony is worthy of credit; and if my aſſertion is not ſufficient, I am ready to eſtabliſh it by legal evidence, by oath, or any other ordeal that my accuſers may demand. But for the preſent, I take my leave of them with the ſentiment of a Poet and a Pagan.

Εἰ δ' οἶδ' ἁμαρτάνεσι, μὴ πλείω κακὰ
Πάθοιεν, ἢ καὶ δρῶσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμέ.

POSTSCRIPT.

For the information of thoſe who are unacquainted with Weſtminſter School, it is neceſſary to ſtate, that the Sacred Exerciſes, mentioned above, were collected and drawn up by the late Mr. Wilcox, ſon of the Biſhop of Rocheſter, a moſt pious and devout Chriſtian, and one of the moſt elegant ſcholars of his time. They conſiſt of Leſſons with appropriate Collects, and comprehend many of the moral and

and poetical paſſages from the Prophets, Eccleſiaſtes, and the Book of Wiſdom. They form only part of a general ſyſtem intended to have been completed by an exemplification of Greek morality, from the Memorabilia of Xenophon; and of Roman morality, in a work called Roman Converſations. The firſt and ſecond part of this plan were executed, and are adopted. The Roman Converſations were finiſhed by Mr. Wilcox, but not publiſhed till after his death, when they proved too voluminous for the purpoſe intended; but they are always recommended to the Scholars for peruſal.

RELIGIOUS

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
In Westminster School.

In the three firſt forms, where children are eſtimated from 8 to 10 years of age—The Pſalms and Goſpels turned into Latin, are an exerciſe four days in the week.

On Monday Catechiſm repeated.

In the two other forms of the Lower School—Sacred Exerciſes two days in a week.

On Mondays, alternately—Biſhop Williams's Expoſition, and the Catechiſm repeated and explained, *viva voce*.

Boys 10, 11, or 12 years of age.

Upper School.

Fourth Form.

Bible Exerciſe. Greek Teſtament. Sacred Exerciſes—and, at firſt, Greek Teſtament every day conſtrued and explained.

Fifth Form, and Shell.

Nearly the ſame; with Sacred Exerciſes occaſionally in all three.

Sixth Form.

Bible Exerciſe on Saturday.

Grotius Leſſon on Monday, explained at large.

KING'S SCHOLARS.

Grotius, Hebrew Pſalter, Bible Exerciſe weekly.

Upper Boys receive the Sacrament four times a-year; always lectured and prepared.

Throughout the Upper School,

Greek Teſtament during Paſſion Week—the hiſtory or doctrine explained.

Confirmation once in two years—a week's lecture to explain and prepare.

Prayers in College, and at the Boarding-houſes.

On Saturdays in Term, Lectures are read to the King's Scholars by a Prebendary.

This Inſtitution has produced two learned and uſeful publications by Dr. Heylin and Dr. Blair; and the duty is now very meritoriouſly performed by the Rev. Mr. Hughes, Prebendary.

RELIGIOUS

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
AT WINCHESTER.

Prayers regularly morning and evening in Chapel.

Catechetical Lectures regularly read.

Upper Boys receive the Sacrament once a-month.

Grotius read and explained every Sunday evening.

This account is very imperfect.

FINIS.

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Ed
V

Vincent, William
A defence of public education.

479357

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